

Message Text

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ACTION FBO-05

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R 291014Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6006

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD, AFSP, PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: PDRL ATTEMPT TO ENCROACH ON EMBASSY PROPERTY

REF: (A) VIENTIANE 0118 (B) VIENTIANE 0038

1. AT MID- MORNING JANUARY 24, LOCAL SECURITY GUARDS ADVISED ADMINOFF THAT EMPLOYEES OF THE PDRL MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS (MPW) WERE ENGAGED IN CLEARING LOT "B" ADJACENT TO THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. WHEN INFORMED BY EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE LAND WAS USG PROPERTY, MPW PERSONNEL ON THE SCENE STATED THAT ALL APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN THE PDRL HAD APPROVED THE CONSTRUCTION ON THE LOT OF A WAREHOUSE TO BE USED BY UNICEF. POLCOUNS TELEPHONED MFA SAME MORNING TO INQUIRE/LODGE INFORMAL PROTEST. AS EXPECTED, MFA REPRESENTATIVE, (KHAMPHOUY SOUKRISAK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS) EXPRESSED IGNORANCE OF THE SITUATION. POL COUNS ALSO EXPLAINED PROBLEM TO LOCAL UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE, WHO KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE LAND'S OWNERSHIP AND WAS APOLOGETIC AND EMBARRASSED TO LEARN THAT LAND BELONGED TO US. HE STATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH THE LAO AND REQUEST THAT THEY FIND A NEW SITE.

2. IN FOLLOW-UP TELECON WITH KHAMPHOUY MONDAY JANUARY 26, NO NEW INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE; KHAMPHOUY SUGGESTED WE SEND A NOTE. WE SENT THE FOLLOWING NOTE JANUARY 27:

QUOTE

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THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA PRESENTS ITS

COMPLIMENTS TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF LAOS AND HAS THE HONOR TO BRING TO THE MINISTRY'S ATTENTION AN INCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED ON JANUARY 24, 1976, WHEN PERSONS WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS EMPLOYEES OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS BEGAN TO CLEAR VEGETATION FROM VACANT LAND WHICH BELONGS TO THE EMBASSY AND IS ADJACENT TO THE RESIDENCE OF THE EMBASSY'S CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN SALAKOKTANE. THE WORKERS STATED THAT THEY WERE CLEARING THE LAND PREPARATORY TO CONSTRUCTING A WAREHOUSE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S EMERGENCY FUND (UNICEF).

THE EMBASSY WISHES TO INFORM THE MINISTRY THAT THE LAND IN QUESTION, WHILE NOT CURRENTLY IN USE, IS PART OF A PARCEL OF PROPERTY THAT THE EMBASSY ACQUIRED IN 1973 IN EXCHANGE FOR ITS FORMER RESIDENCE NEAR THE MAHOSOT HOSPITAL IN DOWNTOWN VIENTIANE. THE PLOT IS NUMBER 380, VOLUME III OF THE SOUTH LAND OFFICE, AND THE TRANSACTION WAS REGISTERED WITH THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE ON NOVEMBER 21, 1973. A COPY OF THE SITE-PLAN OF THIS PROPERTY IS ATTACHED.

THE EMBASSY RECOGNIZES THE DESIRABILITY OF FENCING THIS PROPERTY TO INDICATE CLEARLY ITS OWNERSHIP AND INTENDS TO DO SO AS SOON AS THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AUTHORIZES THE FUNDS NECESSARY.

THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE THE MINISTRY'S BRINGING THIS MATTER TO THE ATTENTION OF OTHER APPROPRIATE AGENCIES OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF LAOS AND ENSURING THAT NO FURTHER ATTEMPT IS MADE TO ENCROACH UPON THE EMBASSY'S PROPERTY. (COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE.)
END QUOTE

3. LAND-CLEARING OPERATIONS STOPPED JANUARY 26 BUT RESUMED JANUARY 27 AND WERE STILL IN PROGRESS AS OF MORNING JANUARY 29. HOWEVER, DIRECTOR OF MFA OFFICE THAT DEALS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TELEPHONED CHARGE AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 29 TO SAY THAT MINISTRY HAD DECIDED TO ERECT UNICEF WAREHOUSE ON SITE IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO OUR LOT (TO SOUTH, ACROSS NARROW DIRT ROAD). TO ADD TO CONFUSION, DIRECTOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REFERRED TO OUR LAND AS "LOT A" AND NEW WAREHOUSE SITE AS "LOT B," WHEREAS IN FBO DESIGNATION OUR LAND IS "LOT B."

4. WE HOPE ISSUE IS NOW SETTLED. IT MAY TURN OUT THAT THE LAO HAVE UNWITTINGLY HELPED US BY PERFORMING WORK FOR WHICH WE WOULD HAVE HAD TO PAY. HOWEVER, ENTIRE EPISODE POINTS UP NEED FOR EARLY AUTHORIZATION OF IMPROVEMENTS OUTLINED REFTELS.

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